

## CHAPTER VI

### THE CHURCH

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has meant different things to many people, but Mormon emigrants to Utah in the period from 1847 to 1870 would probably have been unanimous in saying that an extensive organization was one of the church's chief characteristics. Organization was everywhere apparent. The great migration of Mormons from England, Scotland, Wales, Germany, Switzerland, and Scandinavia was very largely an organized movement. Thus pioneer diaries speak of companies of saints on board ship, companies crossing the plains to Utah, companies organized to settle particular valleys, companies to build roads, dig irrigation systems and mines, and raise livestock cooperatively. There were few problems which the pioneers encountered that were not met by an organized cooperative effort. In order to appreciate properly the settlement in Wasatch County we must understand the role that church organization played in pioneer life and note the problems that were overcome with its use.

One thing that the Mormon settlers learned from their church was a pattern for leadership. This often took the form of a triad in the church. Commonly, one of the triad presided. Presiding Elders, Bishops, Presiding Bishops, Stake Presidents—all were presiding officials with progressively larger jurisdictions. They were appointed by the higher church authorities and took office when sustained by the group over which they had jurisdiction. They were free to choose two counselors to serve with them, who were also sustained by the people in their organization.

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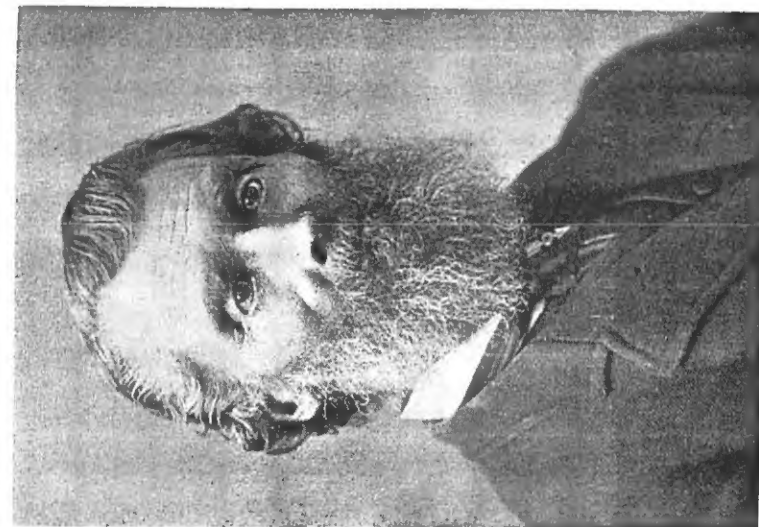
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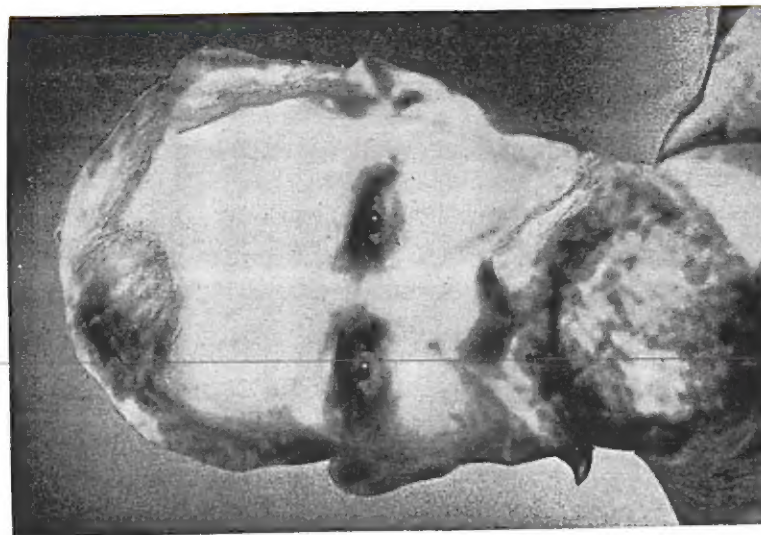
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Chief Tabby

friends and eat some of their beef. A feast was held in the bowery at Heber; and the Indians were given blankets, flour, and eighty head of cattle to alleviate their suffering.<sup>15</sup>

A brief account of the military leader, William Madison Wall, will illustrate the courageous leadership available to the Wasatch pioneers in meeting the Indian threat. He was the son of Isaac and Nancy Wall, born September 30, 1821, in Rottenham County, North Carolina. He joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1842, and when the saints left Nauvoo, Illinois, on their westward march he accompanied them. He assisted in organizing the Mormon Battalion, and in 1850 he crossed the plains in the seventh pioneer company as a captain of fifty.<sup>16</sup> He settled in Provo, Utah, and was bishop of the Provo Fourth Ward there from 1852 to 1854. In 1856 the Church called him for a mission to Australia, where he served as President of the New South Wales Conference until June of 1857.<sup>17</sup>

His return from Australia in charge of a company of Mormon immigrants serves to illustrate Wall's courage and tenacity. Upon arriving in California he found much animosity. An immigrant train for California had been massacred at Mountain Meadows, in southern Utah, and feeling against the Mormon people was running high. During the night various groups of angered citizens sought his life even though he had just that day arrived by ship in San Pedro. Twice they threatened to break into his hotel room to kill him. Being unarmed, he tore

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*

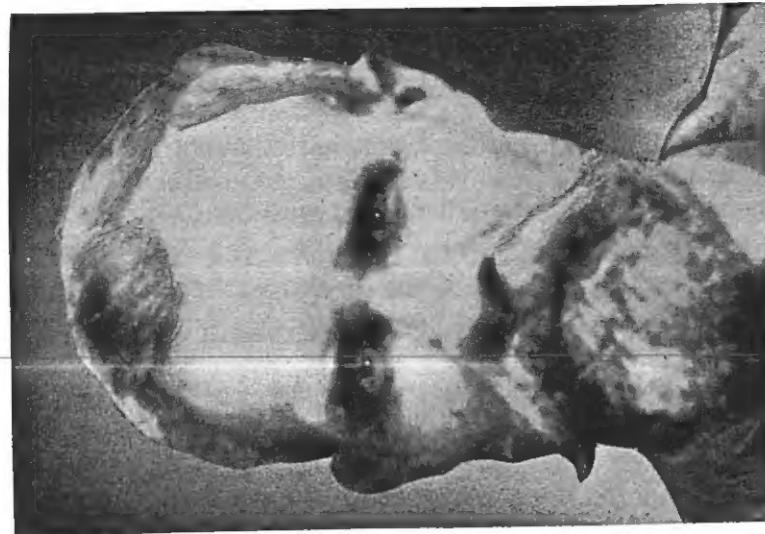
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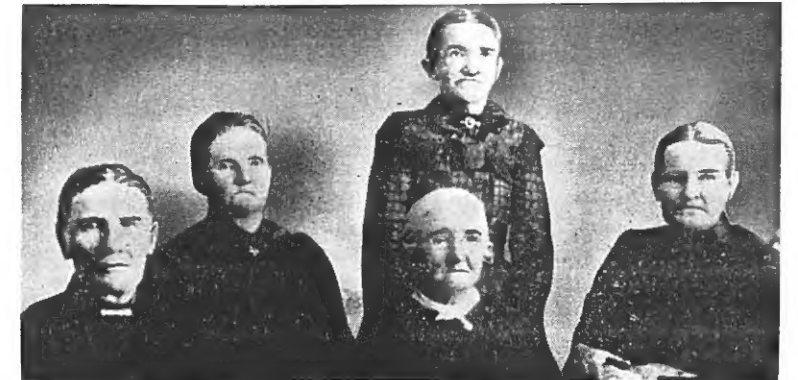
brought. Before the main group of Indians returned a runner came back from Chief Tabby and was immediately taken into the Indian agent's house without seeing the Mormons. Colonel Head, the Indian agent, had come out with the expedition and admonished the Indians not to take the cattle as a present from Brigham Young. He even tried to buy them for the Government to present to the Indians, but Wall flatly rejected the offer, saying, "No sir, you can't buy them, for they are Mormon cattle, and if the Indians eat them they will eat Mormon beef."<sup>11</sup>

The day before the Indians arrived the owner of the agency store came to the blockhouse where the Mormons were staying to tell them that the Indians were planning to kill them. Joseph S. MacDonald, a lieutenant in the cavalry troop, describes the Mormon's hurried preparations:

The man who kept the store came over and said, "They intend killing everyone of you. I cannot see you killed for nothing. I think they will attack tomorrow night. Now, I have ammunition of all kinds, and as soon as it gets dark so the agent can't see you, send your men over and pack it into this house. All I ask is that you return that which you don't shoot. I have a two inch auger. Set your men to making port holes for yourselves. I have a forty gallon barrel. Fill it full of water for yourselves and pack in wood for use. I have a big rope. Sink some posts in front of the house, bore holes right through it, and put the rope through the holes and tie your horses to it so they (the Indians) can't run them off." We worked all night. Next morning, after breakfast, we felt pretty good. The old agent came over and looked around and finally said, "Gentlemen, do you know whose house this is?" I said, "Uncle's, I guess." He never answered and walked on looking at the port holes we had made until he came to one. When he looked through it he swore and said, "That is straight for my door!" The man that owned the port hole tapped him on the shoulder

<sup>11</sup>William Lindsay, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

William Wall  
and his five wives,  
Nancy, Erma,  
Elizabeth, Suzie,  
and Sarah





Lunch was prepared in the Heber Hall where all visitors were served free from 4 o'clock until 7 o'clock in the evening. A dance in Turner's Hall in the evening wound up the days festivities. Shortly after 10:00 o'clock in the evening the train pulled out of Heber for Provo, arriving there at about 12:30 A.M.

All seemed to enjoy themselves during the afternoon and evening, and we believe the visitors went home feeling that they had been well treated by the people of Heber and having a somewhat warmer feeling toward us than they formerly had.

## CHAPTER XII

### POLITICAL GROWTH

#### BOUNDARY SETTLEMENT

Wasatch County became a political entity three years after the beginning of settlement. On January 17, 1862, the Utah Territorial Legislature formed Wasatch County from portions of Green River and Utah Counties. As originally formed, Wasatch was over twice as large as it presently is, including all that territory known as Duchesne County and extending as far east as the Utah territorial line.<sup>1</sup> The major division of the original county took place in 1914. Prior to this there had been two minor changes—one in 1884 and one in 1898. At an election held July 13, 1914, the county was divided and Duchesne County formed from the eastern portion. By decree of William Spry, then Governor of Utah, the division took place on the first Monday in January, 1915.<sup>2</sup> In its final form Wasatch County was fifty-five miles long, thirty-seven miles wide, and contained over 750,000 acres.<sup>3</sup>

#### COUNTY GOVERNMENT

It was during the period that Utah was still a territory of the United States that Wasatch County was organized. Under the Utah territorial law, counties were to be governed by what was known as the county court, composed of a probate judge and three selectmen.<sup>4</sup> The probate judge was elected by joint vote of the Utah

<sup>1</sup>Wasatch Wave, December 21, 1906.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., September 11, 1914.

<sup>3</sup>U. S. Works Progress Administration, Historical Records Division, *Inventory of the County Archives of Utah, No. 26, Wasatch County*, (Ogden, Utah, 1938), p. 5.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 25.





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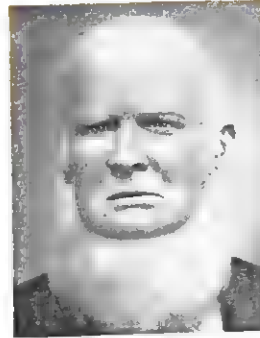
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John Witt



William Wall



Sidney H. Epperson



Thomas Todd



Joseph McCarrell



John M. Murdock

## Soldiers of Spanish American War



Moroni Turner



Elmer Duncan



Taylor Goodwin

Legislative Assembly to a four year term of office. The selectmen were to be elected by the county electorate for a term of three years.

Among the duties of the county court the most important were the management of all county business and the custody of all county property. The court also was to audit all claims, draw warrants on the county treasurer, divide the county into road districts, election precincts and school districts, locate building sites, grant water and timber rights, levy taxes, and oversee the care of the poor, insane, and orphaned.<sup>5</sup> The court also appointed other county officials such as the clerk and the county assessor and tax collector. Duties in addition to the above included the regulation of contagious diseases, erection and direction of the county jail, jurisdiction over fisheries, and the creation of irrigation districts.<sup>6</sup>

In February, 1862, the territorial legislature elected John W. Witt as the first probate judge in Wasatch County. He in turn appointed as selectmen to fill the first term of office Thomas Todd, James Duke, and John Van Wagoner. The court then appointed John Harvey to be the assessor and collector; Snelling M. Johnson, sheriff;<sup>7</sup> John M. Murdock, treasurer; John Sessions, surveyor; and Thomas M. Giles, superintendent of schools.<sup>8</sup>

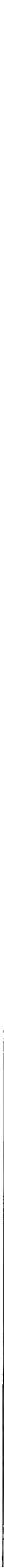
The court next divided the county into precincts. That portion of the County east of the Provo River became precinct one. The officers were Thomas Rasband, justice of the peace; and Zemira Palmer, constable. Precinct two—that portion of the county west of the river—had Morton Jacobs as justice of the peace and Sidney Epperson as constable. Charles Shelton was the first county clerk.

<sup>5</sup>*Inventory of the County Archives of Utah*, No. 26, p. 24.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 24. In addition to civil duties the county officers were frequently the leaders in church government.

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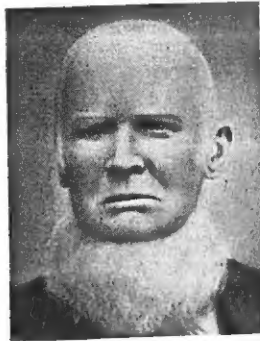


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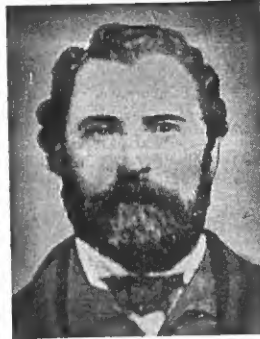
Soldiers of Spanish American War



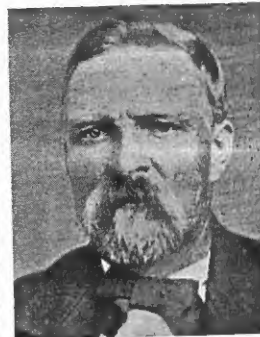
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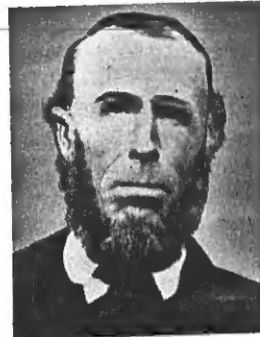
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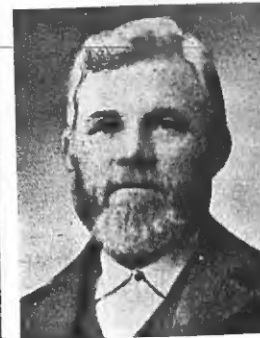
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Officers of Blackhawk War



John Witt



William Wall



Sidney H. Epperson



Thomas Todd



Joseph McCarrell



John M. Murdock

Soldiers of Spanish American War



Moroni Turner



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